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Science and Humanities

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Sciences and Humanities Department

The Iowa State Code, written in 1966, established a comprehensive community college system for the state of Iowa. It called for the establishment of educational opportunities in several areas. Pertinent to Arts and Sciences was “the first two years of college work including pre-professional education.” Not every politician in the state was on the same page. Some thought that community colleges were meant to be vocational education only. Our president, Paul Lowery, was sensitive to this issue and proceeded carefully.

In 1970, DMACC began a bona fide General Education department at the Ankeny Campus. General Education was a euphemism for college transfer coursework. Career Education and Adult Education were already in operation, and were widely accepted and understood. The Ankeny Campus started that year with 17 contracted General Education faculty in English, speech, Spanish, psychology, sociology, humanities, political science, history, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, human services, and criminal justice. Rus Slicker was the first director of General Education.

College Parallel/Career Option Programs. About the same time DMACC was being established, the Federal government was changing priorities in the ways some services were being delivered and was providing incentives for community colleges to offer college parallel/career option programs.

At that time, institutions serving people traditionally hired staff with a high school education or less to provide custodial care on a daily basis. Highly educated doctors, psychiatrists, and social workers provided oversight, assessment and services on an infrequent basis. In the 1960s, The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) determined to transform this model by providing education and training for the custodial workers so that they could begin providing different and better services to people. The newly formed community colleges were enlisted to begin training these paraprofessional workers. These initiatives began occurring in Iowa state institutions that housed people who were mentally ill, mentally and physically challenged, chemically dependent, adjudicated delinquent, children in need of assistance, and those who had been convicted of a crime. Changes also began occurring in county homes, police departments, as well as public and private social service agencies that served the poor, elderly, and children.

The NIMH provided grants to community colleges including DMACC to establish new college transfer associate degree programs for paraprofessionals in broad range of what they called Human Services. These included criminal justice, juvenile delinquency, social services, mental health, alcohol & drug counseling, developmental disabilities, child care, early childhood education, and nursing home care. In addition to traditional core college coursework, NIMH emphasized interdisciplinary instruction by professionals in the fields of sociology, psychology, social work, education, nursing, early childhood education, and criminal justice.

The new paraprofessional educational programs were not only transformative with respect to the services to clients, but also to the workers providing those services. What had been dead end jobs were now designed to provide a career ladder for the workers. The college transfer/career option provided college transferrable coursework that could lead seamlessly from a certificate and associate degree at DMACC to a BA degree after transfer for two more years of college coursework. Graduates with the bachelor's degree would have the option of graduate school and a professional career such as social worker, psychologist, or teacher. At each level workers could move back and forth between education and employment as their interests and careers demanded. Many chose to work in the field while attending classes in order to support themselves and pay for college. This resulted in graduates who were well educated and experienced in their fields. As it provided grant funding to community colleges to initiate these programs, NIMH emphasized several things that changed higher education including these: competency based curriculum, transferability of coursework to four year degree granting institutions, maintaining relevancy by using people working in the field as instructors, and providing education in specific professional skills during the first two years of college.

Director Slicker quickly adapted these concepts at DMACC and facilitated the growth of career option programs. The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) simultaneously established statewide requirements for paraprofessional programs. For example, advisory committees of people working in the field were added to guide the programs. In addition, IDOE reviewed curriculum and certified each program.

In 1972, DMACC received a three-year NIMH grant to establish associate degree college parallel/ career option programs in Social Services, Mental Health, Alcohol Rehabilitation, Drug Counseling, and Developmental Disabilities. Later in the '70s, these were combined into one Associate Degree in Human Services and a one year Certificate in Chemical Dependency Counseling. DMACC also received grant funding in the early '70s to establish paraprofessional programs in Criminal Justice and Juvenile Delinquency. There were also paraprofessional programs in Child Development and Nursing Home Administration. In 1974 DMACC added the Legal Assistant and Teacher Associate programs to its curriculum.

Criminal Justice has evolved with the times and now has areas of specialization within the program, such as electronic crimes, forensics, corrections, and law enforcement. The Educational Assistant program was phased out as a new type of teacher aide position grew in popularity in the K-12 system. Many teacher aides were volunteers with four-year college degrees.

In 1974, the General Education division added department heads: 1) Communications (Lois Campbell), 2) Social and Behavioral Sciences (Lloyd Miller), and 3) Math and Sciences (Burgess Shriver). A faculty union was being developed about the same time, and President Lowery did not want these department heads to be in the union. Thus, they were given strictly administrative duties with no teaching load.

A few years later General Education was renamed the Department of Arts and Sciences. There was a wider public acceptance that community colleges had a role in the college transfer area by that time. Gary Wilcox was the dean. Under Wilcox's direction, the department added Fire Science, another paraprofessional program.

In 1982, a college reorganization occurred in which Arts and Sciences was split. The larger unit became Public and Human Services and retained Communications, Humanities, Social Sciences, Human Services, and Criminal Justice. The Math, Sciences, and Engineering group was merged with the eight existing allied health programs (Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Licensed Practical Nursing, Associate Degree Nursing, Medical Assisting, Medical Laboratory Technology, Surgical Technology, and Respiratory Therapy), along with Health Care Administration, and the Adult Education section that included Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomy, and Emergency Medical Technician-Ambulance (EMTA.) The new department was named Health Services and Sciences. Later Child Care was added to the department, too.

This arrangement stayed in place until 1990 when another reorganization reshaped departments once again. The new department was Sciences and Humanities. It was similar to the original general education structure in that all allied health programs and adult education went back to their original locations. At this time, department heads in Sciences and Humanities were in the faculty union and did teach half-time.

Throughout all these administrative changes, DMACC maintained articulation agreements with surrounding four-year colleges. Furthermore, Sciences and Humanities received comprehensive data from these colleges indicating how much transfer shock occurred as a student left DMACC and matriculated to the senior college. Every semester the Iowa Regents institutions sent us the comparative data. While a student might commonly suffer a loss in g.p.a. (grade point average) of 0.5 units (out of 4.0) in the first semester, they typically recovered to nearly the same g.p.a. that they held at DMACC by graduation time from the senior institution.

The objectives of the Sciences and Humanities Department are to

- Provide liberal arts and pre-professional courses for students who wish to complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree at the community college with the option of earning an A.A. or A.S. degree;
- Provide general education courses required by most DMACC career and vocational programs; and
- Provide remedial and developmental courses in mathematics, reading and writing for students who need academic assistance before undertaking college level work.

1990-2002

The 1990s was remarkable in growth of enrollment. Double digit increases from year to year were the norm at the Ankeny Campus in Sciences and Humanities.

A major highlight of the era was our relationship with Des Moines' sister city and Iowa's sister state in Russia: Stavropol (city) and Stavropol Krai (a region in Southern Russia) and grant writing was initiated by Anne Schodde, Vice-President of Development, and John Liepa, history faculty member, and they made initial contacts in Stavropol. With funding from a United States Information Agency (USIA) grant, the College established faculty trips from Stavropol State Pedagogical Institute (SSPI) to DMACC and from DMACC to SSPI. In May of 1992, nineteen faculty and administrators from DMACC traveled to Stavropol and Pyatigorsk to make presentations about the American community college system. At that time, Russia did not have an existing community college system, and older citizens wishing to go into higher education were effectively shut out.

Twelve faculty and administrators from SSPI also visited DMACC the same year. Further grants were written and the exchange grew over the next several years.

Numerous productive offshoots from the Stavropol exchange occurred. For example, Frank Trumpy (group leader of math/science/engineering and physics instructor) worked with the Iowa Hospital Association to establish a modern internet connection between Iowa and Stavropol Krai to allow doctors to exchange medical information electronically. This project later expanded with Trumpy carrying out other technology/medical projects in Shijiazhuang, China and Same, Tanzania with the help of Iowa Sister States, the Eurasia Foundation, PEPFAR, and the Iowa Hospital Association. Trumpy later received the Outstanding Service award for 1997 from Iowa Sister States and was recognized at the Governor's Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony the same year.

"All of our International Year activities make me proud of the department and reflect back on the beginnings of these endeavors," said Burgess Shriver. "The International Year concept was the brainchild of Dick Wagner, History faculty member, in the mid-80s. When he received approval to hold Japan Year in 1985, it began a rewarding series of featured country focuses that brought out impressive leadership from Wagner, Tom Beck (Political Science), Mike Delaney (Sociology), Ed Lowe (Business), Larry Anderson (Business), Rick Chapman (English), Lyla Maynard Psychology), Joanne Brown (Dean), Maura Nelson (French), and Jim Stick (Humanities), just to name some who led multiple International Years," Shriver commented.

International Year activities also triggered offshoots such as a Fulbright-Hayes Grant that funded a DMACC and Yamanashi College faculty exchange that lasted several years. At the time, only two such exchanges existed in the entire U.S. The grant funded visiting faculty to travel between the two institutions for a semester-long experience.

In 1996, the department developed a new Biotechnology program, leading to an Associate in Science degree. The new paraprofessional program was developed in response to requests from industry and the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Federation. The program was approved by the Iowa Department of education and began the following academic year. Beryl Packer was the program chairperson.

A number of articulation agreements were produced during this era. For example, the Criminal Justice program entered relationships with Grand View College and Simpson College that were essentially 2+2 programs. Human Services developed an articulation agreement with Upper Iowa College.

The Ankeny chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society – Beta Epsilon Chapter of the Two-Year College for students campus-wide began. The first induction occurred in 1997. Two years later, the Ankeny chapter was recognized as a Top 25 Chapter at the national convention in Anaheim, California.

EXPRESSIONS, a local publication recognizing the best student writers and artists, won the Associated Collegiate Press' national award in 1992. Rick Chapman, English faculty member, served as coordinator for the publication.

The Sciences and Humanities department had an important part in implementing a sabbatical system for faculty renewal that became part of the faculty collective bargaining agreement.

Yoshiko Swift was named the Iowa Sister States Volunteer of the Year Award winner in 1996. Over the years she was responsible for numerous faculty and student exchanges between students at Yamanashi Gakuin Junior College and DMACC. She also coordinated the Yamanashi High School Intensive English Program each October. During her employment at the College she served as the official translator for numerous U.S./Japanese affairs including meetings between the respective governors of Iowa and Yamanashi Prefecture.

Jim Stick and Maura Nelson lead annual trips to France in cooperation with our Culinary Arts program and the French Chef's exchange situated in St. Etienne, France.

The department began a program in which DMACC Ankeny Campus was in charge of the remedial math at Iowa State University in the mid-'90s. The so-called Math 10 program served as many as 700 students per year on the ISU campus. About six years later the program shifted back under the jurisdiction of ISU.

A study abroad program was developed in the mid-'90s in which DMACC students could elect to take classes in Cambridge, England. The London/Cambridge Study Abroad Program was sponsored by the American Institute of Foreign Study and the Iowa Community College Study Abroad Consortium. As the program evolved, DMACC began sending its own faculty to Cambridge to teach for a semester and supervise the program. The program is now based in London.

The department was involved in numerous new outreach programs. The Post-Secondary Option Enrollment Program began to offer college credit course in the far corners of the 11-county district. The department also set up on-site courses for employees of Bridgestone/Firestone Des Moines plant and credit classes at the Des Moines Regional Police

Academy. Art classes were offered at Dahlquist Clayworks so that David Dahlquist's studio could be used for tile making, ceramics, and sculpting classes with equipment unavailable on campus.

Numerous faculty were published during this dozen years. One of the most monumental projects was coordinated by Hal Chase, History faculty member. He was responsible for a 500-page non-fiction book titled *Outside In: The African-American History of Iowa*. It was the first comprehensive academic history of black Iowans. Hal wrote grants for funding, selected the editor, chose chapter authors, and wrote one chapter himself.

Lloyd Miller, Anthropology and Spanish, served for over a decade as the national editor of the *Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges Newsletter*. Even after retirement as an emeritus faculty member, he continued in this role as the newsletter transitioned to an on-line version.

Virginia Bennett (Music), Sharon Hann (Art), Bill Johnson (Drama), and Jim Stick (Humanities) developed a proposal to build a dedicated fine arts building. The building would have housed art, drama, and music near the DMACC Lake with a large auditorium and all necessary resources to present concerts, plays, and exhibits. Though the proposal failed to be implemented, it remains one of the department's best ideas.

Credit goes to Rick Chapman for initiating an annual Creative Writing contest, to Julie Simanski for starting a speech contest, and to Bill Johnson for implementing a short-play contest for students. These extracurricular activities enriched the lives of numerous students over the years.

Challenges

Proper placement of students in math courses was always a challenge. A student may have taken two years of high school algebra and received passing grades. When assessed at the college, many of these same students showed deficiencies in the expected skills. No matter how many assessment tests that were given to students, they often wanted to enroll in math classes for which they were not yet ready. While assessment testing did improve over the years, DMACC's open-door policy had its drawbacks for sequential coursework like math.

Over the years student enrollment skyrocketed, but there was not much growth in the ranks of full-time faculty. At the same time, there was an ever growing number of adjunct faculty, often squeezed into small spaces, sharing desks and bookcases. Every year the department asked for additional full-time faculty and rarely were heard.

Wages for adjunct faculty were usually not competitive with wages of adjuncts at Iowa State University or Drake University. This put DMACC at a competitive disadvantage when searching for part-time teachers.

Credits

Burgess Shriver with contributions by Roslea Johnson

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